

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMCONSUL MUNICH
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 08861

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, UR, US, CH, JA
SUBJECT: LENIN'S BIRTHDAY: SOLOMENTSEV DELIVERS BLAND
SPEECH

BEGIN INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. THE ANNUAL LENIN DAY
SPEECH, DELIVERED FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 21 BY CANDIDATE
POLITBURO MEMBER SOLOMENTSEV (DURING SECRETARY VANCE'S
VISIT), WAS REMARKABLE PRIMARILY FOR ITS BLANDNESS. IN
CONTRAST TO THE HARSH LINE TAKEN BY CC SECRETARY ZIMYANIN
LAST YEAR, SOLOMENTSEV WAS MILD CONCERNING BOTH CHINA
AND THE U.S., AND SAID NOTHING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS OR
"INTERFERENCE" IN SOVIET INTERNAL AFFAIRS. BREZHNEV
APPEARED FIT AND RELAXED. ANDROPOV AND KIRILENKO WERE
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ABSENT. ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING ASPECTS OF THE
AFFAIR WAS AN UNUSUAL FLAP OVER LEADERSHIP SEATING.
END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

1. THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION OF THE SPEECH MATCHED THE
OTHER PARTS IN BLANDNESS, LACK OF NEW ELEMENTS, AND
CURSORY TREATMENT OF ISSUES. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MAIN

POINTS:

-- ON THE NEUTRON BOMB SOLOMENTSEV REPEATED THE STANDARD LINE ABOUT THE WEAPON INCREASING THE DANGER OF WAR AND OF A NUCLEAR ARMS RACE. HE ALSO CLEARLY PLACED THE ISSUE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SSOD, ALONG WITH OTHER DISARMAMENT ISSUES.

-- THE REFERENCE TO CHINA WAS UNUSUALLY BLAND, WHICH IS SURPRISING IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT STATE OF POLEMICS, BUT NOT AT ALL SO IF YUGOSLAV REPORT ABOUT IL'ICHEV'S RETURN TO PEKING AND REOPENING OF THE BORDER TALKS IS CORRECT (SEPTEL). THERE WAS NO PRC WALKOUT FROM THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS SECTION OF THE BALCONY DURING SPEECH, AS OCCURRED LAST YEAR, BECAUSE THE CHINESE WERE NOT THERE, POSSIBLY TO AVOID HAVING TO WALK OUT SHOULD SOLOMENTSEV MAKE ANY OFFENSIVE REMARKS.

-- THE LEAST BLAND PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SECTION WAS THE MENTION OF JAPAN, WHICH INTERESTINGLY PRECEDED THE U.S. PARAGRAPH. THE SPEAKER UNDERLINED SOVIET READINESS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH JAPAN, "OUR NEIGHBOR IN THE FAR EAST," BUT CHOSE TO HIGHLIGHT -- SIMPLY BY INCLUDING THEM IN A TWO-SENTENCE PARAGRAPH -- "CIRCLES" IN JAPAN WHICH UNDERESTIMATE THIS AS WELL AS UNDEFINED "FORCES" PUSHING FOR AN "ANTI-SOVIET COURSE."
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-- U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS GOT A ONE SENTENCE CHARACTERIZATION AS IMPORTANT BECAUSE "ON THEM DEPEND IN LARGE MEASURE THE GENERAL INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CLIMATE." THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY A PLUG FOR CONTINUED "CONTACTS" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY NOTING PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGES.

-- ON SALT SOLOMENTSEV SAID THAT MUTUAL INTERESTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET-AMERICAN COOPERATION FIND THEIR "PRACTICAL FULFILLMENT" IN THE "MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS" OF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS "AND ABOVE ALL OF SALT QUESTIONS." HE ADDED THE STANDARD LINE THAT THE SOVIET SIDE WAS DOING ALL THAT WAS "NECESSARY."

-- ON THE HORN HE REPEATED SOVIET SUPPORT FOR ETHIOPIA, FOR "SETTLEMENT" OF THE HORN CONFLICT, AND FOR THOSE STRUGGLING FOR "NATIONAL AND SOCIAL INDEPENDENCE."

-- HIS REFERENCES TO DETENTE, THE THIRD WORLD WERE ALL ALONG THE USUAL LINES.

-- IN AN OBVIOUS SWIPE AT THE SPANISH CP, HE NOTED THAT CLASS ENEMIES AND OPPORTUNISTS OF ALL TYPES WERE INTENSIFYING THEIR ATTACKS AGAINST LENINISM AND WERE ATTEMPTING TO KNOCK THIS "MIGHTY REVOLUTIONARY WEAPON" FROM THE HANDS OF COMMUNISTS.

2. ON DOMESTIC MATTERS, SOLOMENTSEV PRESENTED A STANDARD LAUNDRY LIST OF PAST ECONOMIC ATTAINMENTS AND CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. PRAISE FOR BREZHNEV WAS SPRINKLED THROUGHOUT THE SPEECH, AND WAS PARTICULARLY HEAVY IN THE SECTION ON THE CPSU, WHERE SOLOMENTSEV

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LAUDED THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S SIBERIA TRIP AND SPOKE OF THE ENORMOUS RESPECT AND GRATITUDE BREZHNEV ENJOYED AT HOME AND ABROAD.

3. AT LEAST AS INTERESTING AS THE SUBSTANCE OF SOLOMENTSEV'S SPEECH WAS THE INTERPLAY AMONG THE LEADERSHIP AS SOLOMENTSEV DRONED ON. FOR EXAMPLE:

-- A FLAP (NOT SHOWN IN THE LIVE TV COVERAGE) DEVELOPED OVER THE SEATING OF THE CANDIDATE POLITBURO MEMBERS

AND CC SECRETARIES IN THE SECOND ROW ON THE DAIS; THE APPARENT CAUSE WAS PONOMAREV'S LEAVING A SEAT EMPTY TO HIS RIGHT, PLUS HIS SUBSEQUENT REFUSAL TO MOVE DOWN WHEN THE PROBLEM EMERGED;
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-- THE RESULT WAS THAT ONCE SOLOMENTSEV GOT UP TO SPEAK, THERE WERE TWO EMPTY SEATS IN THE SECOND ROW CENTER (THE ORDER BEING EMPTY SEAT, PONOMAREV, DEMICHEV, KUZNETSOV, KAPITONOV, CHERNENKO, DOLGIKH, AND SOLOMENT-SEE'S EMPTY SEAT);

-- SEVEN MEN WERE CROWDED INTO THE NEXT SECTION OF SIX SEATS(FROM RIGHT TO LEFT, RUSAKOV, RYABOV, ZIMYANIN, SIZOV, YEPISHEV, SHITIKOV AND GEORGADZE);

-- TWENTY MINUTES AFTER SOLOMENTSEV BEGAN HIS SPEECH, RUSAKOV MOVED OVER TO SOLOMENTSEV'S EMPTY PLACE AND SOUGHT TO SHIFT THE OTHERS OVER ONE SEAT TO THEIR RIGHT; PONOMAREV APPARENTLY REFUSED TO BEGIN THIS PROCESS BY FILLING THE EMPTY SEAT NEXT TO HIM; AFTER EXTENSIVE WHISPERED CONSULTATIONS, WITH CHERNENKO THE CHIEF ARBITER, AS SOLOMENTSEV FINISHED HIS SPEECH RUSAKOV NIPPED AROUND TO THE EMPTY PLACE NEXT TO PONOMAREV ENABLING SOLOMENTSEV TO RETURN TO HIS ORIGINAL SEAT.

4. IN OTHER LEADERSHIP MATTERS, BREZHNEV SEEMED RELAXED AND FROM TIME TO TIME CHATTED QUIETLY WITH KULAKOV (TO BREZHNEV'S RIGHT) AND GRISHIN (TO HIS LEFT). ALL OF THE MOSCOW-BASED SENIOR LEADERS WERE PRESENT EXCEPT ANDROPOV AND KIRILENKO. THE LATTER WAS ABSENT IN 1976 AND 1977, AND PRESUMABLY TAKES HIS ANNUAL VACATION AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. THE FORMER HAS BEEN OUT OF THE PUBLIC EYE SINCE LATE MARCH.

5. WE DOUBT THAT PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO SOLOMENTSEV'S BEING CHOSEN TO DO THE HONORS THIS YEAR. JUNIOR SECRETARIAT MEMBER ZIMYANIN READ
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THE SPEECH LAST YEAR, AND THERE WAS NO APPARENT SIGNIFICANCE TO THAT OR TO THE ORDER OF SPEAKERS IN PREVIOUS YEARS (ANDROPOV IN 1976, SUSLOV IN 1975, PONOMAREV IN 1974, AND USTINOV IN 1973). TOON

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